



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE  
[www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)

*"Solving Problems for the Growing World"*

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Number:** ARS-A5W-0208  
Alternative Merit Promotion

**Position Title/Series/Grade:**  
Boiler Plant Operator  
WG-5402-11

**Promotion Potential:** WG-11

**Employment Type:** Full-time - Permanent

**Grade and Salary Range:**  
WG-11 \$20.52 - \$23.93 Per Hour

**Location of Position:**  
National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa

**Who Can Apply:**  
Government-Wide (Local Commuting Area)

**Opening Date:** March 7, 2005

**Closing Date:** March 21, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

**More than one position will be filled.**

**Contact Information**

**Human Resources Specialist:**  
Jennifer Slevé  
(301) 504-1395

**Location Contact Information:**  
Janae Lentz  
(515) 663-7277

**DC Relay Service:** (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

**Send Applications to:**  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division, WSB  
Attn: Jennifer Slevé  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5106  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5106  
**Fax:** (301) 504-1535  
**E-mail:** [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov)

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

**Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.**

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

**This position requires the selectee to undergo a pre-employment check and a full background investigation. Any offer made is considered a tentative job offer pending the outcome of the pre-employment check. Retention in the position is based upon a favorable adjudication of the background investigation. The incumbent will be subject to periodic reinvestigations.**

**Major Duties:**

The incumbent operates, repairs and maintains a bank of four mechanically fired, gas, and oil-fueled boilers, whose maximum generating capacity is 128,200 pounds of steam per hour at 125 pounds per square inch pressure. Operates and repairs a dual fuel turbine that produces 1200 KW. Operates and repairs air compressors, cooling towers and water softeners. Tests and analyzes boiler water, feedwater and condensate using standard chemical tests, and determines the necessary treatment and chemicals to be used. Starts up, adjusts, and shuts down (as load demands) a bank of five centrifugal refrigeration machines whose total capacity is 5,325 tons. Monitors an operator work station which gives an audible and visual alarm on malfunctioning equipment that must be kept in constant operation and is located in the outlying area. Ensures compliance with air pollution laws and regulations. Checks operation of safety equipment. Performs scheduled and unscheduled adjusting, cleaning, repairing, replacing defective parts, painting and lubricating programs on all installed equipment and related accessories. Responsible for detecting malfunctioning equipment and machinery and arranging for repairs for the entire laboratory. Trains operators and/or lower grade workers in specific methods of operation, repair and maintenance.

**Physical Requirements:** Work requires close hand-and-eye coordination, active walking, prolonged periods of standing on concrete floor, climbing, bending, reaching, and working in cramped positions or crowded areas. May be required to lift equipment or materials weighing up to 75 pounds.

**Working Conditions:** The incumbent normally performs duties inside of heated buildings, but may be required for short periods of time to work on equipment in or on roofs of outlying building in inclement weather.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must have experience and/or training of sufficient scope and quality to perform the duties required. Applicants will be rated in accordance with their knowledge and skill in the job elements listed below.

1. Ability to do the work of a boiler plant operator without more than normal supervision (screen-out element)
2. Knowledge of equipment assembly, installation, repair, etc.
3. Operation of boiler plant equipment
4. Technical practices (theoretical, precise, artistic)
5. Use of measuring instruments
6. Ability to interpret instructions, specifications, etc. (includes blueprint reading)
7. Dexterity and safety

**Physical Examination is Required.**

**Supplemental Questionnaire:** Applicants will be required to complete a supplemental questionnaire. The questionnaire **IS ATTACHED**. Applicants who fail to complete and return the questionnaire **WILL NOT** receive further consideration for the position.

## **Other Important Information**

### **Benefits Package:**

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

### **Veteran's Preference:**

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

### **Relocation Expenses:**

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

### **Financial Disclosure Requirement:**

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

### **False statements:**

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

### **Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):**

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

### **USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:**

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

### **Selective Service System:**

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

### **Reasonable Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding

reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

**Civil Rights Policy Statement:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).**

## Application Package Checklist

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.**

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit the following web site for additional information:
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
  - \_\_\_ Job title
  - \_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - \_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Employer's name and address
  - \_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information
  - \_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
  - \_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week
  - \_\_\_ Salary
  - \_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)
  - \_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)
- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if

you are a current or previous federal employee)

- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html> ).

**If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.**

## Supplemental Questionnaire for Boiler Plant Operator WG-5402-11

**Element 1. Ability to do the work of a Boiler Plant Operator without more than normal supervision (SCREEN-OUT ELEMENT).**

1. Describe your experience operating high pressure boilers.
2. In your experience described above, did you operate the high pressure boiler  
\_\_\_\_\_ independently  
\_\_\_\_\_ under close supervision  
\_\_\_\_\_ as an assistant
3. Are you able to start up the appropriate boiler with specific instructions? Describe the procedure.
4. Do you assist other qualified personnel in the operation of the boiler plant? Describe what you do to assist.
5. Have you ever had to keep plant operating daily logs? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
6. Have you ever done any troubleshooting in a boiler plant? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

**Element 2-E. Knowledge of equipment assembly, installation, repair, etc.**

1. Are you able to recognize most malfunctions (e.g., when a bearing knocks)? Cite instances.
2. Tell about your ability to take corrective action when there is a malfunction in the boiler plant.
3. Describe your ability to troubleshoot and thus prevent most problems from occurring.
4. Under supervision, are you able to replace boiler components? Give examples. Could you also do this on your own initiative without supervision?
5. Cite other examples of work you can perform in the boiler plant.



## **Element 6. Operation of boiler plant equipment**

1. Tell about your experience in pulling down, reassembling and cleaning individual components of a high pressure boiler.
2. Describe the level of supervision required for you to perform the above task.
3. Have you ever given technical support or instructed competent workers at lower grade levels in the operation and preventive maintenance of a high pressure boiler plant? Explain.

## **Element 25-E. Technical practices (theoretical, precise, artistic)**

1. Are you familiar with boiler gauges? Describe in general what the gauges indicate.
2. Can you read and interpret boiler plant gauges and meters:  
\_\_\_\_\_ independently  
\_\_\_\_\_ with assistance

3. Have you ever had to adjust equipment to correct a problem indicated on a meter or gauge?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes

\_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, tell about it.

#### **Element 60. Use of measuring instruments**

1. List the different types of boilers (including capacity) and their operation with which you are familiar.

2. List any courses you have taken connected with the boiler.

3. Have you ever worked with air compressors, cooling towers, and/or water softeners? In what capacity?

4. Are you able to make chemical analyses of a boiler to determine necessary water treatment?

5. Are you familiar with a micrometer? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Are you familiar with a caliper? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

**Element 75-A. Ability to interpret instructions, specifications, etc. (includes blueprint reading)**

1. Is a manual used in your daily work in the boiler plant? Describe.

2. Are you able to read and interpret blueprints? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Can you understand written material better than blueprints? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

3. Are you able to instruct others in the reading of drawings? \_\_\_\_\_ Circuit diagrams? \_\_\_\_\_  
Blueprints? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What kind of instructions have you been given on jobs?

\_\_\_\_\_ oral \_\_\_\_\_ general

\_\_\_\_\_ written \_\_\_\_\_ detailed

**Element 86. Dexterity and safety**

1. Can you recognize a hazardous situation in the boiler plant? Explain.

2. Do you take corrective action to prevent a hazardous situation on your own, or do you need other qualified personnel to assist or tell you what to do?

3. Have you had an accident in the boiler plant in the last year? If so, describe.

I certify that the above answers are true to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date